

Mr. Kent, AD/NE

18 December 1961

NE/ONE

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Background on SNIE 31-61: "Short-Term Indian Intentions Toward Goa," dated 13 December 1961.

1. SNIE 31-61 was requested by General Cabell in mid-morning 12 December. The Board of National Estimates met on a staff draft shortly after 5:00 PM the same day. Agency representatives coordinated the draft estimate the morning of 13 December. The paper was approved by the USIB that afternoon.

2. The final words of the six paragraph SNIE are: "...we believe that the chances of a direct military invasion (of Goa by India) are still about even." The process out of which this formulation grew is outlined below. ONE's purpose in putting the estimate in these terms was to make clear that the intelligence community felt that the danger of military action was real and that there was no reason to modify the serious concern being manifested in the policy branches of the government.

3. The even chance "formulation" was decided upon after as careful and thorough a study as time permitted because the evidence seemed to indicate that Nehru himself had not yet made a final decision, and because we were unable to give

superior weight to either of the conflicting forces bearing on his decision which were described in the paper: i.e. (a) the strong evidence that Indian military preparations for invasion has gone so far as to be difficult to reverse, and (b) our belief that Nehru did not consider acquisition of Goa to be so essential to India's national interests as to justify its seizure by force--especially in view of the adverse impact such action would have on his own and India's image abroad.

4. The uncertainty over the precise balance of the forces involved was reflected in the opinions of the various contributors to the SNIE. DDI area specialists (ONE staff and OCI), relying mainly on Nehru's restraint in previous crises over Goa and their judgment of his attitudes, objectives and ability to control developments, began by rating the chances of invasion as slightly less than even (in the context of the SNIE). The State Department INR representative personally tended to rate them as considerably less than even -- an opinion which ONE Staff informally determined was shared by officials in both the NE Bureau and the Policy Planning Council of State.

5. At the representatives meeting, the Army representative offered an amendment to the draft to make the chances less than even. The Air Force representative proposed a change to make them greater than even (in part for the purpose of increasing the impact of a paragraph which the Air Force wanted to add on the threat to US Portuguese relations and Azores base rights if the Indians did take Goa). This was opposed by all other representatives, including ONI, J-2, and DIA, who preferred the "about even" formulation which CIA had evolved.

6. It is worthy of note that the quoting of odds fluctuated violently in the days immediately preceding the Indian invasion. On 11 December [redacted]

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[redacted] changes his estimate of the chances of invasion from

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60-40 against to 60-40 in favor, noting that the Embassy did not believe the odds that high. On 14 December, [redacted]

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[redacted] estimated that military intervention would take place very soon. The same day the DDI representative in

[redacted] were estimating the

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chances of ~~any~~ attack as high as 80-20. Also on 14 December,

[redacted] reported that the Country

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Team believed that there was no reasonable doubt that military action would be initiated in the nearest future unless the

Portuguese negotiated withdrawal. Yet on 17 December,
midnight, less than 24 hours before the action began,

expressed the belief that
action was not then imminent.

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